

MAY 1953

Except at high levels fresh snow was virtually absent during this notably warm month. Melting of the winter accumulations on the mountains proceeded rapidly. On Crossfell the last traces of drifts which had an estimated maximum depth of 8 ft. on the *1st* disappeared by the afternoon of the *17th*. In the Cairngorms Sròn Riach (3534 ft.) was snow-free by the *24th*.

SUMMER 1953

June opened with a spell of unseasonable cold, the temperature ranging commonly from 15° to 20° F. below normal. On the *1st* sleet occurred as far south as Downe (560 ft.), Kent, and on both the *1st* and *2nd* snow was widely distributed at high and moderate levels in Scotland. Cover on the Cairngorms extended down to 1500 ft. and at greater altitudes there a general thick layer, said to have been 3 ft. deep in places, was reported. On the *16th* about one-third of the southward-facing slope of Cairn Gorm was completely coated. At the end of June's third week very warm weather set in, temperatures of 81° to 83° F. being attained even in northern Scotland on the *23rd* and *24th*. Extremely quick thawing of the snow-beds resulted: one in Coire an t' Sneachda decreased in depth at the rate of more than 12 in. per day from the *22nd* to *25th*. By the latter date the southern face of Cairn Gorm was clear. On *July 1st* the only part of the Cairngorm range still harbouring a fairly extensive cover was the eastern flank of the Ben Macdhuì *massif*. Late in July a patch of snow measuring about 500 ft. by 300 ft. was found a mile or so north of the summit of Ben Macdhuì, and on *August 23rd* two areas of compacted snow occupying some 9000 and 15,000 sq. ft. respectively were observed on the slope above Tailors' Burn and near Snowy Coire in the same vicinity. Towards the end of September this patch in Snowy Coire had disappeared. Ben Nevis was reported to have become snow-free at about the same time. But, as usual, minor patches in Cairngorm gullies survived throughout the summer and early autumn. One of these, described as "very icy," and measuring 28 ft. by 10 ft., was examined in Garbh Choire Mòr (Braeriach) on *October 17th*, and another was observed from a distance in Allt Choire Mòr (western face of Ben Macdhuì) on the same date.

E. L. H.

## NOTE ON DURATION OF SNOW COVER ON BRITISH MOUNTAINS

THE duration of snow cover was again moderate; the average at 2500 ft. on the mountain groups used as indices in these reports was 79 days, which is the average for the past six seasons.

Diagrams showing the distribution of snow cover relative to height for seven stations are given on page 361.

Harris, in the Outer Hebrides, reported snow cover in each month from September to April. The snow line reached sea level on 8 days in the season, and the maximum duration of cover occurred in December with 13 days above 1500 ft.

The Cuillins of Skye had some cover in each month from September to March, with a maximum of 27 days in December down to 3000 ft. The snow line fell to sea level on 10 days during the season.

The peaks around Glen Lyon also had cover in the months September to April, with a maximum duration of 25 days at 3000 ft. in December and at 3500 ft. in April.

The summit of Ben Nevis was under continuous cover from *October 1st* to *July 4th*, a total of 277 days, and down to 2000 ft. the mountain was under snow continuously throughout December and January. The snow line reached sea level on only 5 days, all in February.

The Paps of Jura were snow-free in September, October, January and May. The maximum cover occurred in December with 12 days' cover down to 1500 ft. The snow line fell to sea level on one occasion only, *April 3rd*.

The Caernarvonshire peaks were under cover some time in each month of the season, but only on the extreme summits for one day in October and May. The maximum cover was in December with 25 days at 3000 ft.

No snow cover was observed on the Brecon Beacons in September, October or March, and only the extreme summits were covered in April. The summits were under continuous cover throughout December and February.

Curves showing total seasonal duration at five stations up to 3500 ft. are drawn in Fig. 1 (p. 362): 200 days' cover was exceeded on Ben Nevis at and above 3000 ft., and 100 days' cover was reached on the mountains about Glen Lyon and on the Brecon Beacons above 2500 ft.

D. L. C.

### SNOWFALL IN BRITISH COASTAL WATERS

THE earliest date of snowfall observed at sea from merchant ships was *November 12th*, when the M.V. *Glamis* reported sleet showers from 17 miles east of the Tyne to 12 miles off *Coquet* lighthouse between 20.45 hr. and 23.00 hr. Sleet and snow showers were reported between Harwich and the *Dowsing* lightship on the *17th* and *18th*. Considerable snowfalls occurred from the *21st* to the *28th*, from Loch Maddy in the Hebrides to the Thames and across the North Sea to Bremerhaven. The S.S. *Markwood* reported heavy snowfall in the Thames estuary from 17.20 hr. to 22.00 hr. on the *26th*, and the M.V. *Crombie* reported a severe snowstorm on the *21st* at a point in mid-North Sea 10 miles east-north-east of the Pit Buoy.

In December moderate to heavy snow showers were widespread from the *11th* to *17th*. The M.V. *Loch Carron* reported moderate snowfalls on the *14th* and *15th* between Barra and Lochboisdale in the Hebrides; and on the *15th* the S.S. *Dalewood* reported heavy continuous snowfall from midnight to 05.32 hr. off the east coast between the *Dowsing* and *Corton* lightships. On this day the S.S. *Bestwood*, moored at Charlton Buoy in the Thames, reported heavy snow from 05.00 hr. to 07.00 hr. and the M.V. *Oriole* encountered heavy sleet and snow showers between the Nore Towers and London Docks. Heavy squalls of snow on this day were reported between Trevoise Point, Cornwall, and Foreland Point, Lynmouth, by the S.S. *Fulham IV*. This ship also reported heavy snow in squalls off Dunster, Bristol Channel, on the *27th*. The M.V. *Errol* reported heavy snow and sleet showers at Dundee on the *30th*.

In January snow showers were widespread from the Tyne to the English Channel. On the *2nd* the M.V. *Cortachy* encountered moderate snow showers between Flamborough Head and Longstone lighthouse, between noon and 22.50 hr., and the M.V. *Oriole* reported intermittent snow and sleet between Le Havre and the *North Goodwin* lightship from 09.00 hr. on the *3rd* to 12.20 hr. on the *4th*.

On the *31st*, between Lochboisdale and Usinish Point in the Hebrides, the M.V. *Loch Carron* reported heavy showers of snow, accompanied by a north-north-westerly gale, from 04.00 hr. to 15.00 hr. The M.V. *Accum* and the M.V. *Edinburgh Merchant*, anchored in Yarmouth Roads, reported continuous snowfall from 23.00 hr. to midnight.

In February snowfalls were widespread between the *6th* and *15th*; the M.V. *Arbroath* met with squalls of snow on the *6th* between the Farne Islands and St. Abb's Head; and the M.V. *Lochee* encountered heavy squalls in the North Sea from a point 160 miles north-west of P8. L.V. (off Germany) on the *4th*, to a point 4 miles north-east of St. Abb's Head on the *6th*. The S.S. *Markwood* reported a heavy snowstorm at 11.00 hr. on the *6th* when leaving Blyth, which reduced visibility to nil, and on this date the S.S. *Dalewood* reported continuous heavy snow off Whitby between 13.15 hr. and 14.50 hr.

On the *7th*, the S.S. *Birdwood* reported one hour of continuous heavy snow between the *Cromer* and *Dudgeon* lightships, which gave a half-inch layer on decks and reduced visibility to nil. Further south, between the *Corton* and *Newarp* lightships, the S.S. *Cerne* met with continuous snow from